

# CSEPP

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## CHEMICAL STOCKPILE EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS PROGRAM

### OREGON EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

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PENDLETON, OREGON—One in four residents living in the Immediate Response Zone (IRZ) surrounding the Umatilla Chemical Depot do not know what to do in the event of a chemical emergency at the depot. That is just one finding of a wide-ranging survey commissioned by Oregon Emergency Management on behalf of the joint Umatilla CSEPP community. The survey was commissioned to determine how prepared the public is for a chemical agent emergency.

Chris Brown, the Oregon CSEPP Manager said the survey shows that "We still have a long way to go before residents nearest the depot have a thorough knowledge of what they need to do to protect themselves and their families."

Brown indicated that the findings show that although 73% agree with the statement, "I know what to do if I am warned of a chemical emergency at the Umatilla Chemical depot," 24% disagreed and 3% were not sure if they would know what to do. "That is still more than a quarter of the population," Brown said. "We in the CSEPP community need to do better."

The timing of the polling coincides with a major advertising effort to raise awareness of citizen responsibility for knowing what actions to take in a community emergency involving toxic nerve agents. Brown is confident that the "advertising campaign will help turn the corner on public awareness," which over the course of several prior surveys, has shown similar results.

Public Information Officers supporting county, state and federal CSEPP efforts devised 22 questions that were asked of 800 residents living closest to the depot in Morrow, Umatilla counties in Oregon, and Benton County in Washington. The survey, the first of three scheduled in the program, took place in late June and will be repeated in 90 days, and again in 180 days. The survey was conducted by Moore Information, Inc., a public opinion research firm in Portland, Oregon.

The survey probed issues concerning protective actions such as sheltering in place and evacuation, sheltering in schools and bus evacuations.

In an executive summary of the survey, the polling company said there was "much work" to be done to educate people about emergency preparedness. "Indeed," the report said, "if 25% of the public is doing the wrong thing in an emergency, the result would be a major catastrophe."

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*Media note:* The executive summary of the report is provided for your information.